

AMENDMENT

A change, such as a change to the Constitution

BILL OF RIGHTS

A list of citizens' rights, specifically the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution

CENSUS

An official count of the population made every 10 years

CHECKS & BALANCES

The system that gives each of the 3 branches of government ways to limit the powers of the other two

CITIZEN

A person with certain rights & duties under a government

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Freedoms to think & act without government interference or fear of unfair legal treatment

CIVIL RIGHTS

The rights of full citizenship & equality under the law

CONSTITUTIONALISM

The idea that the structure and powers of government should be based upon a written or unwritten agreement, setting limits to the power of the government

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Document that describes the natural rights of all people, lists the colonial grievances against the king, and declares that, because the king and Parliament have failed to protect the rights of their American subjects, they declare themselves "free and independent states"

DELEGATED POWERS

Powers which are specifically listed in the U.S. Constitution as being granted to the national government

DEMOCRACY

Government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives

DICTATORSHIP

A government in which a single leader or party exercises absolute control over all citizens and every aspect of their lives

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

Being placed on trial twice for the same crime

DUE PROCESS

A process by which the government must treat accused persons fairly according to rules established by law

EQUAL REPRESENTATION

Representation in which each state's Congressional membership is the same

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The branch of government responsible for executing or enforcing the laws

FEDERALISM

The division of powers between the states and the federal, or national, government

IMPLIED POWERS

Powers claimed by national government which are not specifically listed in the Constitution

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The branch of government responsible for interpreting the laws

JUDICIAL REVIEW

The power of a court to refuse to enforce a law or government regulation which it believes to be unconstitutional

JURISDICTION

The authority of a court to hear a case

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The branch of government responsible for making the laws

MONARCHY

A system of government in which one person, usually a king or queen, inherits power

NATURALIZATION

Process by which an immigrant becomes a citizen

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Active citizenship; can include voting, lobbying, letter writing, etc.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Representation in which each state's Congressional membership is based on its population

PUBLIC POLICY

Government response to public issues

REPUBLIC

A system of government carried out by elected representatives

RULE OF LAW

The concept of a government of laws

SEPARATION OF POWERS

Dividing government power among legislative, executive, & judicial branches

SUFFRAGE

The right to vote

U.S. CONSTITUTION

The fundamental law of the United States

GERRYMANDERING

manipulate the boundaries of (an electoral constituency) so as to favor one party or class

JUDICIAL REVIEW

review by the US Supreme Court of the constitutional validity of a legislative act

FEDERALIST

supported the creation of a stronger U.S. federal government, and later opposed the ratification of the 1787 Constitution

ANTI-FEDERALIST

opposed the creation of a stronger U.S. federal government, and later opposed the ratification of the 1787 Constitution

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

a body of people representing the states of the US, who formally cast votes for the election of the president and vice president.

MIRANDA RIGHTS

the rights (as the right to remain silent, to have an attorney present, and to have an attorney appointed if indigent) of which an arresting officer must advise the person being arrested

JURY

a body of people (typically twelve in number) sworn to give a verdict in a legal case on the basis of evidence submitted to them in court.

GRAND JURY

a jury, typically of twenty-three people, selected to examine the validity of an accusation before trial

VIRGINIA PLAN

Drafted by James Madison in 1787, the plan recommended that states be represented based upon their population numbers, and it also called for the creation of three branches of government.

NEW JERSEY PLAN

called for each state to have one vote in Congress instead of the number of votes being based on population

